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To: ["R7 Senior" <Staff>](#)
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Radioactive Waste Concerns Citizens In Bridgeton

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by [Rebecca Roberts](#), updated on: 10:20pm, June 17, 2013

<http://fox2now.com/2013/06/17/radioactive-waste-concerns-citizens-in-bridgeton/>

MARYLAND HEIGHTS, MO (KTVI) – A Missouri state representative is calling for the emergency removal of nuclear waste in the West Lake Landfill. This comes after his advisors discovered serious errors in a 1974 government document, including the amount of radioactive waste in the landfill.

On Monday night, Representative Bill Otto held a meeting at Pattonville High School to share these concerns with the public.

The EPA has been using this decades-old document to show that the landfill doesn't pose an immediate threat. However, there is a fire burning at the adjacent Bridgeton landfill that's only 1,000 feet from this dangerous waste. And with the errors just discovered, Otto and others say it's a scary situation.

"It's a lot worse than I think they're saying," explains Otto.

First, a decimal point mistake means there is actually 100 times more uranium in the landfill than originally calculated. Additionally, a Washington University scientist found that the landfill could contain a particular type of radioactive waste, not originally documented, that has the capacity to contaminate groundwater.

Lastly, the clean soil used to dilute the toxic waste was taken from the nearby Latty Avenue nuclear site, meaning that soil is probably far from being clean.

Now that the Bridgeton landfill fire is approaching the toxic waste, Otto demands that the EPA remove the material now. He says, "The only way this radioactive waste will harm you and I is if we ingest it. Either breathe it, or drink it, or eat it. If the fire reaches the radioactive waste, it could put portions of it airborne, and subsequently the community would be threatened by this material being in the air."

At the landfill meeting, many longtime residents said they had no idea about the nuclear waste in the landfill until recently. Dawn Chapman explains, "With the fire there, and it getting into the groundwater, and all these chemistry mistakes, I want the Army Corps of Engineers to get in and do an emergency removal."

Bob Nowlin adds, "It was moved there illegally from what we understand, so I think everybody's been trying to hold it a secret as much as they can. It was just moved over there and used as landfill dirt."

EPA officials still don't see the nuclear waste as an immediate threat, since it hasn't come into direct contact with the public.

But Otto says that's unacceptable: "We should protect the community before the stuff gets airborne, before it's a problem. And if the EPA wants to sit and say once it's airborne we'll protect you, I'm not going to accept that. I will not accept that."

At Monday's meeting, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources fielded questions about the fire that has now been smoldering in the landfill for more than two years.

Next Tuesday at 6:30pm, the EPA will hold a public meeting, also at Pattonville High School, to discuss the nuclear waste issue.